

NORTH *Bi* NORTHWEST

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CLOSER TO HOME: SIX AND A HALF YEARS IN SBWN

By Beth Reba Weise

My beginnings with the group really are from the very beginning. In August of 1985, I read an article in the *Seattle Gay News* about a woman who'd put in an ad to start a bisexual women's group. I immediately called the number and showed up at the first meeting the next Sunday. I'd been with my partner "Michael" for four years at that point, but I also identified very strongly as gay (these days I'd say queer) and was having a hard time being lesbian and heterosexual at the same time.

The meeting was great. Jet was the woman who'd put the notice in *SGN*. Joan Hill and I, and about ten other women turned up in her living room in the University District and started talking. It was the first time I'd met anyone, much less a whole roomful of women who said right out they were bisexual.

We kept meeting at Jet's for a few weeks. Then as more and more women came, we eventually split into two groups. In some ways the two groups mirrored the differences between today's Newcomer's group and the big group. One met at my household up on Capitol Hill, at 23rd and Republican. The women who came to our

household tended to be more political, often women who came out of the lesbian community. The women who met at Jet's tended to come from a more heterosexual background. Not that that was always the case of course, but the groups each had their own flavor.

My housemate Ellen and I were both bi, and the women who filled the revolving third housemate slot (it wasn't our choice, that's just how it happened) all seemed to be bi as well. Perhaps it was our ads for "non-homophobic, non-heterophobic" housemates. Anyway, the house-

hold was the site of many formative SBWN events. In those first two years we met every other Sunday in the afternoon. We made huge pots of tea, people brought goodies and we bonded like you wouldn't believe! For many of us it was the first time we had a safe place to talk about our sexuality, without

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SBWN Statement of Purpose

We are a group of feminists working to create a bisexual support network and to promote equality for bisexual people in both the heterosexual and lesbian/gay communities. We regard ourselves as part of the larger sexual minority community, and consider the fight for lesbian/gay rights to be our own. We are dedicated to the right of all people to define their own sexuality, free from any social, political or economic coercion. We seek to provide a safe place for women to explore all aspects of their sexuality. All women are welcome to attend SBWN activities. While we work with men on issues of common interest, our group is exclusively female to keep the concerns of women in the forefront of our work.

The discrimination we face as women and as sexual minorities is only one facet of oppression: all bigotry is our enemy. We stand behind the racial and ethnic liberation movements and the struggle for economic equality. However, in any work we do, feminism and the interests of women will be our central concern.

Seattle Bisexual Women's Network, a member project of Gay Community Social Services, P.O. Box 30645, Greenwood Station Seattle, WA 98103-0645, (206) 783-7987. Write to this address.

Join the Seattle Bisexual Women's Network and become a card-carrying bisexual!

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POLIFIDELITY

by Anna Hebner

Polyfidelity was the topic of discussion at the January 5 meeting of SBWN. "Polyfidelity" is a more positive way to say "non-monogamy." To many people, the word "non-monogamy" implies infidelity with unfaithfulness.

The meeting's facilitators opened discussion by having each woman introduce herself and tell the group whether she had been more monogamous or non-monogamous in her recent sexual history. The women revealed a range of experiences with and attitudes toward non-monogamy. One woman said the idea of polyfidelity had never even occurred to her; another woman said it had never occurred to her that people could be monogamous.

Although none of the women said they definitely opposed non-monogamy, many of them had never practiced it. A few women did not mind the idea of non-monogamy, but felt that they had only enough time and emotional energy for one relationship at a time. Someone else reflected that although she had always defended the idea of non-monogamy, she had passed up chances to experience it. She thought that probably on some level she objected to it, at least for her. Another woman, having had only monogamous relationships, had come to believe that monogamy was not for her.

Some women had been involved in unintentional non-monogamous relationships. One woman had become involved with people who had initially misrepresented themselves as single. A couple of women, practitioners of serial monogamy, noted that sometimes one of their "monogamous" relationships had overlapped with the next. One woman was happily, monogamously married for years, and found her life disrupted when she unexpectedly fell in love with a woman.

Several women were deliberately

February, the month known for its blah-ness, looks to be especially exciting for the bi-community. The highlight is, of course, the holiday for all lovers, Valentine's Day, now also known as the First Ever National Bisexual Visibility Day on February 14. A giant gala is planned for the entire evening, kicked off by a press conference (look for us in the news). Check out our jam-packed calendar for other events in the next couple months.

SBWN is undergoing some changes. The large size of the group, while a measure of its success, is becoming problematic as it inhibits discussion and sharing at meetings. Other issues, including a lack of promptness of members and a growing need for consistently strong facilitation (and more facilitators) are causing dissatisfaction at both the main meetings and in the Newcomer's group. The Coordinating Committee has been discussing possible solutions. In the meantime, more volunteers are needed to facilitate meetings.

The big issue of 1991, whether to include transsexuals in our membership, has come up for review. Anyone with any interest in or opinion on this issue should be sure to attend the March 29 meeting. Transsexuals interested in joining or who do belong are especially invited to attend.

Something to think about: lots of groups have a "doing business as" name that members can use instead of revealing the true nature of the organization. This has been proposed by SBWN members who wish to put the organization on resumes, applications, etc.. In our case we wouldn't use the "b" word, but we'd probably keep the same initials. Seattle Busy Women's Network? Seattle Business Women's Network? Let us know.

Well, we're feeling a little more comfortable with the Mac and the Newsletter. Special thanks for help with this issue (and the last one, if we forgot to mention you) go to Jim, Ian, Peggy, Kathleen, Ann, Susan, Lucy, Elizabeth, Ted, Anna, and Ben. We're still interested in getting advertisers and if anyone has skill or experience or interest in this area please let us know. Also SBWN still needs a fundraiser. Wouldn't it be nice if we were big, and lucrative too?

Our deadline for articles for the April issue is March 1st. News or other small items can be accepted at a later date, however.

And don't forget we welcome any feedback, etc. in addition to submissions.

Have a visible Valentine's Day.

-Erica and Dawn

polyfidelitous. One woman had sometimes been in relationships which were *de facto* monogamous, but had always supported non-monogamy for both personal and political reasons. Another woman, a member of the polyfidelity group (See calendar, back page), said that during the 1980s none of her relationships had been monogamous. Her current relationship was monogamous by agreement, but open to change. Someone else labelled herself "polyfidelitous by nature."

The facilitators then passed out whole stacks of photocopied articles about

non-monogamy and polyfidelity. One facilitator, a polyfidelitous person, spoke about her perspective on issues of monogamy and non-monogamy. She explained monogamy as a system developed to control female sexuality, to guarantee that the children of a man's woman would be *his* biological offspring. Furthermore, she believes that most people actually are non-monogamous, since studies have found that up to 50 percent of married women and 70 percent of married men have had affairs.

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...AND BISEXUAL (?) CONFERENCE

by Rebecca Kaplan and Annie Senghas

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BiWomen of Boston

Last weekend we attended the Fifth Annual Lesbian and Gay and (Bisexual?) Studies Conference at Rutgers University. The conference was an exciting event, featuring over 250 papers and 2,000 participants, several films, a book display, and a dance. Progress in the role of bisexuals at this conference moved several steps forward, and took a couple steps back.

It was hard to choose among the many panels. Often five panels were being given at one time, each with four papers. Many topics were covered, with titles ranging from *Prosecution as a Discourse on Sodomy in 18th century Holland* to *Madonna and the Glamour Dykes: The Politics of Lesbian Camp*.

Many of us wondered how much this year's conference would address bisexuality. Last year, at the *Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Studies Conference at Harvard*, a flyer was handed out advertising this year's conference. That flyer announced the coming 1991 Lesbian and Gay Studies conference, with the word bisexual intentionally removed. As the date of the conference approached, we learned that papers dealing with bisexuality had been accepted for the conference, and a bi caucus and symposium had been planned.

Saturday morning, the bleary-eyed bis had to get out of bed early in order to attend the 9am symposium titled: *Lesbian, Gay...and Bisexual?* It was an inspiring symposium, well worth the loss of sleep. The panelists were Elias Farajaje-Jones, Cora Kaplan, and Boston's own Robyn Ochs,

Pam Ellis, and Warren Blumenfeld. They discussed a range of issues including: the history of the bisexual movement, the roles of people of color in the conference and in queer communities, and the re-naming of organizations to include the word bisexual. Pam led us in her "and bisexual" chant, to be uttered whenever the names of "lesbian and gay" organizations are mentioned, and we all practiced renaming the conference together. Incidentally, we were pleased and surprised that no one present said bi's should not be part of "Lesbian and Gay" studies.

In addition to the symposium, there were two panels devoted to bisexual issues. The first was *Boundary Politics: Bisexuals in Lesbian and Gay Communities*. The second bi panel was entitled *Re-contextualizing Bisexuality*.

Outside of these exclusively bi panels, bisexuality was rarely mentioned. For example, the most popular panel during the first session, *The United (?) States of Queer Theory*, did not even allude to the existence of bisexuals in queer theory. This experience caused some to question whether the term "queer" ensures bisexual inclusion.

The Bisexuality Caucus was held during the lunch break on Saturday. We all got to meet each other, learn more about who the other bi's are, and what we're interested in. It was an opportunity to discuss our concerns about the conference, and to articulate a bi agenda. Not all bisexuals necessarily agree on bisexual issues. For example, some of us prefer to encourage using the term "queer", while others prefer to use the word "bisexual" and press for its inclusion alongside "lesbian and gay". We all did agree that increased bisexual participation, by any name, was an important goal. We also discussed our concerns about the increased ghettoization of "marginal" topics in the conference. Papers dealing with issues of bisexuality,

feminism, and race were each placed in their own panels, and were therefore likely to reach only those who were already aware of those issues. We also noted the call for papers in the conference packet for the Sager Symposium (on *Constructions of Lesbian, Bisexual, and Gay Identities in the Popular Media*), which especially urged the submission of papers on bisexuality. This is a positive sign for future conferences.

On Saturday there was a Plenary Symposium on Race, Ethnicity, and Sexuality. No other events were scheduled to take place during this symposium, in order that everyone could attend, and most people did. They had a panel of articulate and moving speakers: Samuel Delany, Richard Fung, Yukiko Hanawa, Cherrie Moraga, and Mab Segrest. Some of the issues discussed were: the mutability of racial/ethnic identity, the lack of outreach to communities of color by conference organizers, and the need to marginalized groups to build strong communities from within. The audience had several minutes to add questions or comments at the end. The speakers were impressive, so it was unfortunate that no forum for real dialogue was provided.

Except for in the bi panels, there was a marked absence of feminism in the conference content and structure. Towards the end of the conference, feminists met at a caucus in order to air our concerns, and discuss ways to influence future conferences. Our concerns were highlighted by the ironic fact that this caucus had to be rescheduled, since the conference organizers had originally planned for it to take place at the same time as the main organizational meeting. The caucus drafted a letter to future and present conference organizers addressing concerns about issues of accessibility, and the underrepresentation of feminists on the organizing committee. Some specifics included the

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FIRST INTERNATIONAL BISEXUAL CONFERENCE

by Liz Highleyman

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BiWomen of Boston

The First International Bisexual Conference was held October 4-5, 1991 at the Vrije Universiteit (Free University) in Amsterdam. The conference was sponsored by seven Dutch bisexual groups, and the majority of the 250 attendees were from the Netherlands. The American and British bisexual communities were well represented, with attendees from Boston, San Francisco, and DC. The conference was the first official attempt to bring bisexuals together for an international gathering, although recent US and UK conferences have been international in fact if not in name.

The morning sessions both days consisted of academic presentations. This was a contrast to most US conferences, which tend to be run by activists, with more of a focus on bisexual community building and politics. It was disconcerting to hear professional sexologists presenting as scientific fact things which contradicted many people's lived experiences as bisexuals. A more participatory, discussion-based format would have been welcome. A lot of emphasis was put on the biology rather than the social aspects of sexuality. A few speakers conflated sexuality with sexual behavior and gender, and bisexuality with androgyny.

The presentations pointed up some differences in the way European and American bisexuals conceive of bisexuality and the bisexual community and movement. Dutch researcher Gert Hekma suggested that bisexuals should look beyond the gay/lesbian identity and focus on developing a unique bisexual identity. While many gay men and lesbians define gender as the primary component of sexuality, Hekma encouraged bisexuals to acknowledge that desire is as much

(or more) based on other features, such as appearance, personality, age, or activity preference. Many American bisexual activists, on the other hand, claim that bisexuals share a common identity with gay men and lesbians based on shared same-sex attractions and a common struggle against heterosexism, and should integrate themselves into the gay and lesbian community.

Another speaker, Iteke Weeda, a Professor of Emancipation from Groningen, was somewhat bi-supremacist. Weeda sees bisexuality as more highly evolved and superior to homosexuality or heterosexuality. She claimed that in a future society in which the population is aging (resulting in a surplus of older women) and people need a broad extended network for economic security (given the failure of the nuclear family and the welfare state), androgynous bisexuality will be the preferred mode. Most American bi activists, on the other hand, think of bisexuality as part of a continuum of valid options, and believe that all people should be free to love who they choose.

Given the scarcity and inaccuracy of existing research on bisexuality (in which bisexuals have often been lumped with homosexuals), Ron Fox's presentation of his research was eagerly anticipated. Fox, a San Francisco researcher and psychotherapist, presented the results of his survey over the past two years of 900 self-identified bisexuals. His findings show, as expected, that bisexuals are a diverse group. Thirty-five percent had previously identified as gay or lesbian, while ten percent had identified as straight. Many of the younger respondents identified first as bisexual. Fox hypothesized that the bisexual label is more well known and the bisexual identity is more available to people coming out today.

About fifty percent of the respondents were not involved in any bisexual or gay organizations.

The workshops were more varied in topic and more "grassroots" in organization than the academic presentations. The workshops ran the gamut from the personal to the political to the cultural, and included sessions on bisexual health care and HIV, spirituality, body image, safer sex, local community organizing, social change, orgy planning, bisexual characters in film, and a cross-cultural exploration of sexuality and activism.

The organizers did not seem to be as conscious of gender parity and participation by people of color as organizers in the US (who, while they often don't succeed, usually do make an effort). Whether someone was a woman or a person of color was considered less important than their ideas, emphasizing the greater importance of ideological over identity politics in Europe. The dynamics of sexism and racism may also be quite different compared to the US, leading to different priorities. Language difficulties were sometimes problematic. All the academic presentations and most of the workshops were in English, as this was the language common to the most participants, which forced several presenters to use a non-native language.

One of the most striking cross-cultural differences was the way European bisexuals and lesbians and gay men conceive of their sexuality. Sexuality, it seems, is not so much a political identity, defined in terms of being a member of an oppressed group, as it is in the US. There is comparatively more emphasis on ideological politics (for example, is someone a marxist or a socialist-feminist?) and less on identity politics.

The issue of domestic partnerships was one that came up in the workshop, and one

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BISEXUALS CREATE CHANGE AT NGLTF CONFERENCE

by Loratne Hutchins

The 1991 bi presence at the national activist conference, "Creating Change" sponsored by the National Gay and Lesbian Taskforce, was a huge success. We have much further to go, but at least/last many gay activists now know for sure that "we're bi, we're queer, we're here and we aren't going anywhere."

Organizing for a strong bi presence started the moment the 1990 conference ended last November (90). Our presence was directly due to an effort coordinated by Lani Kaahumanu, Robin Ochs, myself and others that lasted from the time the last conference ended and this one began. Lani wrote a letter expressing her concerns for more bi visibility on all levels in early '91 that was followed by another in April '91, which was signed by a dozen bi activists expressing the same. We suggested panelists for a variety of workshops, not just the ones on bisexuality, and urged that bi activists be recognized and involved in all aspects of the conference.

To an extent, this happened very successfully. There were two bi caucuses, a biphobia workshop, and the Bi booth was a big hit. Throughout the conference, we were on hand to correct the numerous biphobic assumptions, such as the one made by a panelist at the workshop on marriage and domestic partnerships that all bisexuals have multiple relationships.

About the only time bisexuals were mentioned in the plenaries was when we named as vectors of AIDS. The lesbian leader of the youth workshop told us that she had written up her descriptions to be bi-inclusive and that the language had been changed to eliminate bis when it was printed in the program. On a similar note, Robin Ochs reported that the NGLTF literature

excised the "B" word even from mentions of student and veterans groups (where these groups regularly include it) and that she had written a letter to the Taskforce requesting that this issue be addressed. She received an answer that it would be for the next event.

On the plus side, several Taskforce and Board members expressed support and asked how they could help improve les/bi/gay communication more. The booth was a huge success and made a difference in everyone's perception of our presence. Lastly, the Biphobia workshop was well-attended though it occurred the last day of the event. What started off as a painful and anger-venting experience ("What are your worst fears about bisexuals?" etc.) ended on a softer, stronger note with people from both sides making arrangements to continue working together. Hopefully, at the conference next year in L.A. we will be able to see the difference in how bis are perceived/treated by the participants. ▼

GRAPHIC DESIGN ILLUSTRATION LETTERING, LOGOS & COLLAGE DESIGN

by Mae Z. Seaward

When you need graphic art from logos to layout, my portfolio and I can be reached at 329-1536.

BI GROUPS MEETING TOGETHER

by Erica Avery

On January 9 1992 SBWN met with SBMU to plan future events. We discussed the 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, Bisexual Visibility Day on February 14, and a joint meeting in April to discuss sexism.

A movement is underway to press for Bisexual inclusion in the April 1993 March on Washington. Letters of support for Bisexual inclusion in the march's title have been sent to the January 18/19 meeting of Bi groups in Los Angeles. This planning meeting also included planning for the 25th anniversary of Stonewall (in 1994). SBWN and SBMU also sent an endorsement and money for the 1993 March.

Big plans are being made for the First National Bisexual Visibility Day on Friday February 14 (Valentine's Day). SBWN and SBMU are planning a press conference, rally, leafleting, a dinner, and a dance in the University District. There will be Mexican food (plenty of vegetarian), and a DJ and/or a band. This will be more of a celebration than a fundraiser. Spread the word and be sure to join us.

On Sunday April 26th SBWN and SBMU will have a joint meeting. Each group will first meet separately for business and preliminary discussion, and then come together for announcements and to discuss sexism. We also tossed around the idea of having a joint meeting to discuss polyfidelity.

We talked briefly about Freedom Day in June and how each group would be involved in that event. Since SBMU is going to help us out by coming to our Newsletter stuffing parties (next one Wednesday March 25) we will have more time to discuss these plans and other ways in which the two groups can work together. ▼

North BI Northwest

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BI-POLITICS: CNN STYLE

by Lorraine Hutchins

How many talk shows have we watched, heard about, or gone on where our Bi lives were trivialized, misunderstood or ignored?! (Countless, I'm sure.) Fortunately the Sonya Live show on CNN December 18, 1991 was a totally different experience. Daily talk show host, psychologist Sonya Freedman, had originally done a show about Magic Johnson, which was, curiously enough, described to us in AMBI (Alliance of Multi-cultural Bisexuals) as "a show on

bisexuality." However, when we questioned the producer as to the actual content of the show we found out that it had only been about gender roles in general.

Eager to seize any opportunity for live nationwide visibility that presents the issues responsibly, we agreed to do our own show. Dr. Elias Farajate Jones, Dr. Tina Tessina and myself were interviewed by Sonya, and callers from around the country were invited to respond. Everytime the questioning seemed to verge on the personal, we turned it back to the political and Sonya welcomed it! We emphasized many points, among them: there are many ways of being Bi; sexuality is a rheostat, not an either/or; in addressing Gay's biphobia, the point is to look at the heterosexism from which it comes; fear and homophobia keep people in the closet and that's why people don't talk about sex - not because they're Bi; and coming out is a necessary risk in a risky age-hypocrisy leads to death in a world with AIDS.

Elias and I talked about the growing movement in this country and emphasized the huge variety of Bi identities over and over. As a "family therapist," Dr. Tessina backed us up on every point we made.

All I can say in closing is that though live national TV is high risk, it can also be the best educational opportunity we've got. If you get the chance to do a similar thing, take a deep breath and go for it! The exhilarating feeling of making a difference by taking a stand and speaking on behalf of beautiful Bisexuals everywhere is worth it. ▼

RUTGERS CONFERENCE...

(Continued from page 4)

fact that child care had been advertised and then not provided; the absence of ASL interpretation, sliding scale, housing, wheelchair access, and other measures that would have made the conference accessible to many more people. Furthermore, the event was poorly advertised, especially to students, feminists, and groups of color, and no effort was made to provide housing other than \$80-per-night hotels. Additionally, we hope that there will be a greater inclusion of feminist thought in future conferences.

Other topics discussed in the business meeting were the underlying hierarchical structure of the organization and the lack of occasion for input. So far there are no plans for a conference in 1992, but we hear the 1993 conference will be held in San Francisco. We hope that the input of bisexuals will have a great impact, extending beyond a mere name change. Perhaps in future worlds, we will have changed things to the point where the words we use today can no longer describe them. In the meantime, we still have our indelible purple pen for anyone who wants to add the words "and bisexual" to their Lesbian and Gay Studies Conference" t-shirts! ▼

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AMSTERDAM

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which gives a good example of cultural differences. In some European countries, including the Netherlands, unmarried partnerships are common. "Respectable" middle-class heterosexuals may live together for years and raise children without being married. There is no equivalent to our society's concept of "living in sin" and the idea of "illegitimacy" of a child of unmarried parents is weak or non-existent. The prevalence of such partnerships among opposite-sex couples would seem to make it easier for same-sex couples to live together as partners. In the US we must fight both oppression directed at same-sex relationships and discrimination against the unmarried. Unfortunately,

European societies do not seem to have come much further than the US in terms of recognizing and accepting relationships between more than two people, regardless of gender.

In many ways, Amsterdam was the ideal site for the conference. The city is known for its international atmosphere, as well as its acceptance of minority sexualities and its tolerance of sexual expression. I was told that this tolerance is a rather recent development (largely a result of the horror of the Nazi occupation of World War II) and is considerably stronger in the cities. Sexual displays in the form of prostitution, sex shows and pornography shops are ubiquitous. Whether due to or despite this sexual openness and the prevalence of the sex industry, Amsterdam felt much less threatening for a woman alone than most American cities, and the prevailing attitudes toward sex and sexuality seemed much more healthy. Sex and nudity are seen as improper in certain situations, but not as evil or sinful. The tolerance in Amsterdam made the nar-

rowness of attitudes in the US all the more obvious by comparison.

Several American activists hoping to collect Dutch queer political T-shirts and buttons were disappointed to find that these did not exist. It does not seem to occur to most Europeans to announce their sexuality in such a manner, even if they are out and involved in bisexual or gay organizations. Perhaps the greater social acceptance of non-heterosexuality makes being bisexual or gay seem like a variant personal characteristic rather than a political statement. While the efforts of groups in the US such as Queer Nation to solidify a queer cultural identity are often exciting, it was pleasing to spend time where one's sexuality is not considered to be the central feature of one's identity, and that lacked the "us" vs "them" warfare mentality that this can engender, a mentality that often leaves bisexuals feeling caught in the middle and not really accepted by either "side".

It was refreshing to go to a disco and see homo, het, and bi people dancing and interacting with one another with little regard for sexual orientation, women with women, women with men, and men with men. In Dutch, the preferred terms are "homo" "het" and "bi"; these are not considered derogatory, and do not carry the political implications or double meaning of our "gay" "queer" and "straight". While there is considerable integration of the sexualities in Amsterdam, conference participants spoke of deep divisions existing between gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals in other countries, especially England and Germany.

The opportunity to examine differences in how sexual identity is thought of and how bisexuals organize in different countries and cultures is a valuable feature of international conferences. I was a bit disappointed that the organizers did not do

enough outreach. Even modest efforts should have been able to draw more attendees from the European countries surrounding the Netherlands; a more concentrated effort would be needed to bring in attendees from Southern Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America, in order to make it a truly international and multi-cultural gathering. These gatherings serve a valuable purpose in providing an opportunity for attendees from widely separated locations to meet one another, network, and share our experiences as bisexual women and men, as much through informal interactions as through planned presentations.

The next international bisexual conference will be held in London, probably in the fall of 1992. Some American organizers have proposed the idea of hosting an international conference in New York City in 1994 to coincide with the twenty-fifth anniversary of Stonewall. ▼

The third course ever on Bisexuality was approved for the spring semester at Tufts University through the experimental college. It will be taught by Robin Ochs, who also taught the course on bisexuality at MIT last spring. The first course was in the fall of 1990 at UC Berkeley and taught by Susan Carlton. The official name of this course is "Contexts and Constructs of Identity: Bisexuality." ▼

FEATURES

MULTICULTURAL ORGANIZING AND OUTREACH

by Cianna Stewart

Reprinted from BiNet

I first want to clarify my use of the terms "multi-cultural" and "multi-ethnic" as a very broad and inclusive term which recognizes differences in culture not only as a result of racial heritage, but also with regard to class, ability, gender, region, sexual/affectional orientation, etc. Particularly within communities of color, there are additional differences between those who are first or second-generation and those whose families have been in the United States for a while. I use "multi-ethnic" in conjunction with "multi-cultural" to make a distinction between culture and racial heritage.

Outreach entails not only the initial efforts to contact other communities but that within these communities, people must know that among our group we recognize that the engagement and dialog process is on-going and not simply a temporary process. By asking questions and re-evaluating the group internally we can help to create a safer, more comfortable space for many kinds of people.

We should not ignore differences as if they have no impact on our interactions with each other, but value them without making judgements based upon those differences. As a Filipina-White American bi woman, I appreciate it when someone begins a question with "I want to ask you something, because I really don't know and don't want to assume that I do."

Of course, while doing all this internal work, many groups are still at a loss as to how to contact other communities. Again, a process of asking questions and evaluation is necessary. The first questions can focus on establishing exactly which groups you are trying to reach, and what are the

similarities and differences between your group and those other communities. Also try to evaluate your outreach materials and techniques with regards to what assumptions you are making through them.

Some examples are:

If our outreach focuses on a queer topic, and we are trying to reach people who are closeted, are we advertising in places that are accessible to the general populace? Or have we placed our ads primarily in locations and publications which assume people have the luxury of being out enough to get there and read them?

Are we aware of the impact religion has on this community? Is our group too adamantly

secular or religious for the people we want to bring in? Do we tend to diminish or elevate a religion's impact on people in our group?

Are we advertising in languages appropriate to these communities? Are we assum-

(Continued on page 18)



CLOSER TO HOME

(Continued from page 1)

worrying about pronouns. We spouted off about the lesbian community, the trouble with men, the trouble with women, and along the way helped each other find jobs, apartments, houses, girlfriends and decent places to go dancing. I swear, there were months when everyone seemed to be single, or unemployed, or changing careers, or coping with the fall out from non-monogamy. We were much smaller then, usually only five to twelve women each time and we were family.

And then there were the parties. Oh, those first slumber parties, the dessert potlucks, the sushi feasts, the time when we played truth-or-dare and Sasha ran naked into a rare Seattle snowstorm rather than give us an example of what she sounded like when she came. We held movie nights, and we watched some really horrible erotica. I'll never forget the incredibly dreadful "Erotic in Nature," which we hooted through while tossing popcorn at the screen during particularly awful scenes.

We held swing parties, at which some of Ellen's med school cohorts taught us to jitterbug. No crockery in the house was safe once they started. We danced hard and ate copious amounts of chocolate. In the summer we'd take every table in the house out to the yard and seat 25 for bountiful potlucks at dusk.

Eventually we grew up. Ellen went off to do her residency, and I moved back in with Michael. SBWN got even bigger and moved to its present meeting place.

For me, the next phase came with the newsletter. Lenore Norrgard (another early member) and I put forth a proposal in 1987 to start a newsletter. We'd both been through a lot in the group, and had come to terms with our sexuality to the extent that we didn't

feel we needed a support group so much anymore, but we still wanted to be involved.

That first issue I typed on the computer I'm typing this article on, and Joan Hill cut up the pages, did paste-up and drew a pretty detailed cartoon, and we were off. Lenore and I co-edited for three years, and in the process got to write all those things we'd been thinking about all those years. Then Gwen Riles came on as co-editor and Lenore became the opinion editor. After another year Gwen moved to Japan, and I had a final year as sole editor before finally handing it off to Erica and Dawn. In the art department, we had the help of myriad women, including Claudia Smelser (now the art director for *Anything That Moves* in San Francisco), Leslie Fleming, and now Mae, our able artist and designer.

SBWN has changed me in ways I can't even begin to list. It gave me a home, a family, and a community. It gave me a feeling of rightness so that I could finally say "I'm bisexual" and it meant something, instead of just "I'm not a lesbian."

For the last two years I've pulled back from the group a great deal as my life has been swallowed up editing a collection of essays called *Closer to Home: Bisexuality and Feminism* for the Seal Press. It will be published this Spring, and it's dedicated to "The Women of SBWN, who in 1985 created a place to come home to." For which I am truly grateful. ▼

MORE NEWS

The Collier Books division of Macmillan Publishing has decided to bring out a \$20.650-page trade paperback Concise Encyclopedia of Homosexuality to be sold in every corner bookstore. This will be based on Garland Publications' two-volume Encyclopedia of Homosexuality, abridged, revised, and with the addition of new entries. I am looking for scholars interested in writing short pieces for the new work on areas in which they are or could become knowledgeable. The emphasis will be on basic facts, with some discussion of theories, but with a minimum of ideology and abstruse academic controversies; on language accessible to the average reader, and on topics of general rather than purely scholarly interest. Not only will new subjects be covered (we will especially need biographical entries on living people and geographical-historical entries on cities and countries), but replacements will be sought for some of the entries in the Garland work. I especially want to encourage women, bisexuals, and members of minority groups to contribute. If you are interested in submitting a new entry, or believe you can improve on any existing entry in the Garland volumes, please contact me.

Stephen Donaldson, Editor-in-Chief,
CEOH
3147 Broadway, #12A, New York,
NY 10027
(212) 666-0344

WHY I LOVE LOVING WOMEN...

The Newcomer's group recently wrote about what we loved about loving women and what we loved about being bisexual. This is a compilation of some of our responses:

Loving women is like taking a hot bath while drinking a diet coke and using raspberry soap that smells like tea...when I love a woman I don't have to tense up all my muscles - so no one notices, under my clothes - since it comes more easily to love another woman than it does to love myself...women loving women validates, illuminates, reciprocates, liberates, not to mention they are lovely to look at, delightful to hold, and smell good too...I love loving women because it is an extension of loving myself and what I love about being a woman...I feel that women, in general, are easier to get to know, there aren't the same games and barriers that seem to exist between men and women. With women I am able to say, with honesty, "I'm finding myself attracted to you."...I love the softness and smoothness of a woman's body, the fact that she doesn't have much body hair...I love a woman's breasts and the mysteries of her secret places...I have been in longer relationships with women than men because I feel women know more about how to have a relationship and make you feel cared about...it is exciting to be intimate with someone who you share so much in common with. And the commonality can really heighten how each of us is unique...I love that it is bold to love women...I think I am loving who I am in the process...we can laugh about blood coursing from between our legs and premenstrual nastiness...I like the vulnerability of most women, the ability to open up and expose themselves...sometimes I barrage myself with harsh, painful questions: do I love

women, or want to love women, simply because I distrust men? Because men make me feel inadequate, make me conscious of my small breasts, my hairy legs, my unpainted face and nails? Do I love women by default? I think not. I love solitude, and loving women makes me feel not like half of a whole, a jagged and ragged torn-up piece of a couple, but rather a whole, shining and autonomous...I love women's soft faces with no razor stubble. I love women's soft lips. I love to laugh with women and I love to engage in intellectual discussions with women...I have felt seen and accepted by a woman in ways no man would understand...loving women adds a new dimension to my life that some people don't have...feeling connected, open, tuning all frequencies...safer, non-competitive...the power between us is more equal than with a woman and a man...you can fool around with a woman in an all woman's dorm and no one suspects...I like the way they smell. I like the way they feel, I like their sense of justice and generosity...loving women is so easy to do. I don't ever have to put on a show or be anything I don't feel like being. I have found myself less likely to be compromising and to be far more assertive...women tend not to have the rough edges that men have - so I feel safer. I can see inside a woman and I feel seen by them...they're soft and feel more like me when I'm with them, part of being a woman loving women is loving yourself...I like that women have softness and patience. I like the encouragement and empathy a woman can give. I like the sharing and community - not competing but including - that women do in relationships. Enjoying the process so much more than the goal...

I love being bi because bis are the greatest people...I have the choice to be with women and show my love for them, but not feel confined if I want to physically be with a male...it makes me more of an independent thinker...it's just the way things are for me...acknowledging myself as bi has been good because it removed what were for me arbitrary and artificial limits on how I could relate to my women friends...you can fall in love with the person regardless of the gender...I'm making some statement about myself that sets me apart from others...it gives me a more complicated life...although I identify as bisexual when I'm single since both sexes seem physically attractive to me, I feel more connected to a Lesbian identity when I am involved with a woman. When I am involved with a man I feel Bisexual...a chance to be androgynous, develop my male and female side...maybe it will help me to understand and be more tolerant to other people, other cultures, others' oppressions, others' needs. I'm sure it does...it makes me feel good that I have the choices, the depth, the diversity...I can't remember a time that I wasn't bisexual, and I've both cherished that difference and learned to ignore it...I feel lucky, it means I get to be attracted to people, not genders, and as I haven't found that I'm attracted to a very high percentage of people I guess it helps that gender isn't a barrier...I love the political statement it makes, that life isn't lived in black and white. I don't fit in neatly somewhere. I need to be recognized for me, not how I fit into your categories...I like the freedom to admire and be attracted to both genders and follow up on my desires, if I'm so inclined, without feeling weird or unnatural...the chance to come to great groups like this...I haven't actually been with a woman. Things are always easier in theory. Were I to become involved with a woman, my "bisexuality" would certainly undergo some

(Continued on page 15)



1 THE THE MOUNTAIN THE BISEXUAL...
NORTH B NORTHWEST
Crimson

B I S E X U A L

Another
Woman
for
Peace

bi gamist
bi otomy
bi zonder
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Bi women don't represent an
obscure subsection of
women, a temporary fluke
created by a specific cultural
or political
situation. Our numbers cut
across generations, classes,
races and lifestyles.

SAFETY MATCHES
AEROPLANE BRAND

**BI
POWER**

BI
AGAIN
BISEXUAL

BI
GAY

WHY I LOVE LOVING WOMEN...

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(Continued on page 15)

INTERVIEW

IN THE BEGINNING...

by Erica Avery

To celebrate our anniversary, I gave a call to the woman who started SBWN back in 1983. Jet was very busy, but she took some time to chat with me about the beginnings of the group and herself.

SBWN: How did you come about starting the group?

Jet: Having been openly bi since I was 13, I knew there had to be more people like me. I wasn't running into them in the bars or anywhere else. There wasn't a whole lot of support for being bisexual, at least back then. So I put an ad in the Seattle Gay News and got about 30 responses, and then another in the Weekly and got over 100 responses.

SBWN: What were you expecting to get when you put an ad in?

J: I had no idea. I guess not as many responses as I got! The first meeting was at my house and about 12 people showed up, some of them are still heavily involved in the group today. The group quickly grew to about 30 people who'd come regularly.

SBWN: What were you and other women looking for in a group?

J: I was looking for emotional support for being bi, not so much for political support. A lot of women were looking for relationships. A lot of women came looking for partners for them and their husbands, and they quickly left when they saw that wasn't what the group was about. We also got many calls from men looking for the same thing, or to see if their girlfriends could join. One woman of color came to a meeting and didn't come back because there weren't any other women of color there. I wish she'd stayed because we needed the input and support from that group.

SBWN: What has been your involvement in the group?

J: I was involved steadily for a couple years and I still come to meetings occasionally. I've had other fish to fry though. My political ambitions are more towards the same area as Sherry Harris'. It'd be nice to have a Bi person in office, don't you think?

SBWN: Definitely. Are you thinking of running for office?

J: Someday. Right now I want to get my college education. I'm working full time as a secretary and going to school part time. I'm also involved in community politics, I was recently appointed to the North Precinct Advisory Council. I'm not hiding being Bi, but I'm picky about who I talk to.

SBWN: What are some of your memories of SBWN?

J: It was real nice when we moved to Beth's house because we had more space. Once a month we'd have a social and new people would come. One thing that always stood out is the diversity of the women in the group. I tend to be more feminine, wearing makeup and nice clothes, and there were women who were more hard driving feminists, had been radical lesbians for years and just decided they were attracted to men. There've been punk rockers, S/Mers, women who were into sex and women who were intellectually bi. Women of all ages, no minors, I don't think, but up to age 55. The diversity has always been a fascinating thing. Also, every once in a while we'd go out dancing to Tugs or Neighbors. That was fun and it gave people a chance to see each other in another light. To do things like Freedom Day together, not just see each other in meetings, builds a sense of community, solidarity, and unity. That's something this group has done. The work some of the people have done with the lesbian/gay community, reaching out, has been just wonderful. It's fascinating to see how all over the

world now people are realizing that the only way to get things done is to be out there. And I think there are probably even more bi people out there still. I'm real proud of this group, and proud that I started it. They've done a lot of great work. ▼

LOVING WOMEN ...

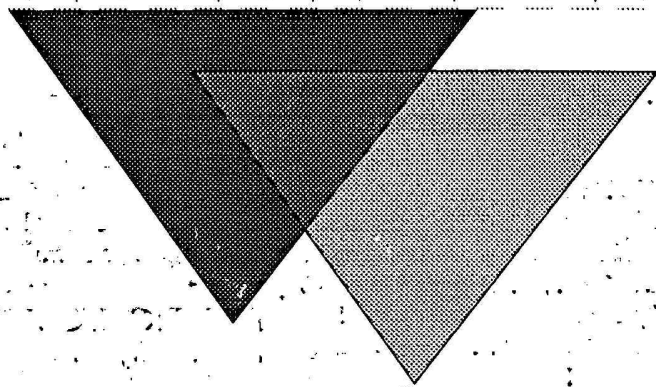
(Continued from page 11)

changes - solidify, perhaps intrude, or enrich, become some concrete "fact" that I could ruminate on. Generally, I feel open, enlightened, with unrealized potential energy - poised at the brink of kinetic...I'm able to step out of traditional roles (of women and women or women and men)...I guess I'll just fall in love with who I fall in love with (without labels, if possible)...I like how open and comfortable I feel in bi groups, the way in which I can relate so easily and openly about being with men or women and not alienating other sexes or other sexual preferences...it's being true to me. I don't know what it would feel like to be straight or lesbian...being bi makes me understand people not as necessarily belonging to rigid categories in all areas of their life, not only in their sexuality...I feel more open to understanding both men and women and different sexual orientations...it makes it obvious to me that not everyone is straight, which is a false view of the world that a lot of straight people seem to live with...I suppose I just get a kick out of shocking people (though this is not always positive)...I qualify to come to these meetings and meet cool people...I love that I can have intense sexual fantasies about this man I'm flirting with, then the next day make love with my female partner and feel wonderfully satisfied...the chance to create new ways of living with people, outside of society's norm...my chance to be open to be in any relationship that I choose. I enjoy looking at and flirting with both sexes and leaving any possibilities open... ▼

Come Out for the First Nationwide

Bisexual Visibility

DAY



**Rally,
Dinner,
&
Dance**

**Valentine's Day
Friday, Feb. 14th**

Rally -- 4:30 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.

Dinner -- 6:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M.

Dance -- 7:00 P.M. to 11:00 P.M.

University Heights Center

50th Ave. NE and University Way

**Alcohol and smoke free environment. All ages / children welcome.
Dinner is Vegetarian. Please *RSVP* by 12 February, Phone 720-4506.
Sliding Scale \$3-10.**

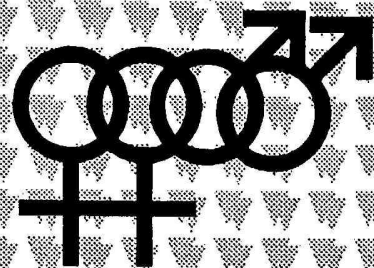


**Presented by the
Seattle Bisexual Women's Network**

and the

Seattle Bisexual Men's Union.

Affiliated with BiNet USA.



...Bi Any Means Necessary!

Contact SBMU @ 720-4506 or SBWN @ 783-7987 for more info.

EDUCATION

TIPS FOR ORGANIZERS

by Cianna Stewart

Reprinted from Binet

Before doing any outreach effort to other cultural and/or ethnic communities, do some "in-house" workshops. Discussions within the existing group which focus on cultural and ethnic backgrounds help to provide a clearer picture of not only what the group lacks, but also what its strengths and diversities are.

Begin by asking questions of the group such as:

What languages do you speak/sign? Is your current language your first language?

Where were you raised? Where were your parents raised?

What is your economic class? What was it when you were a child?

Were you raised by your parents?

Do you have a visible or hidden disability? Does anyone that you're close to?

What is your educational background? Your family's?

How has your sexual orientation affected your family? Your friends?

Were you raised in a religious environment? Are you religious now?

How has your gender affected your environment?

Do you know your HIV status? How has that affected you?

What biases/prejudices were you raised with?

Asking these types of questions must be done with care, because they have the potential of triggering some volatile or emotional response. However, it is better to ask questions than to make assumptions. Questions like these help to allow people with hidden disabilities to speak comfortably about difficult issues and to ask for any assistance they may need. Too often we treat people as if we know their culture as a

result of what we assume to be their ethnicity. People of mixed heritage are assumed to be of only one ethnicity or we address a person's current economic class or class background based on false assumptions instead of more sensitive inquiries into their life experience.

Sometimes we tend to assume someone's educational background based on our own histories. At other times we might assume that someone was raised in the United States because they don't have an accent we can detect, or that they weren't born here because they do.

Any effective multi-cultural outreach must be based on an acknowledgement of what we don't know about other cultures and that the learning comes from a sensitive and dedicated approach towards other cultural and ethnic communities. Questioning and discussions within the existing group are very valuable when we actually decide to do some outreach and expand our cultural or ethnic diversity. ▼

IMPORTANT NOTE TO MEMBERS

by Dawn Palmer

SBWN is approaching the one year mark on its March '91 decision to allow male-to-female transsexuals to join the group. This issue sparked heated debate for almost a year prior to that decision, which was initiated by a woman who identified as TS and who wished to join. One of the results of that vote was that the policy regarding transsexuals was to be re-evaluated after one year, so we are providing an opportunity for people to re-consider the issue at an upcoming meeting. But first, we want to remind everyone of the history of the decision and of SBWN's policies for consensus decision-making.

Several topic meetings were arranged

to give members and TS people the chance to learn from and about each other. The two extremes of the issue were represented, with some feeling that we had no right to exclude anyone who identified as a woman, and others who expressed the point that being raised female in our society was crucial to being able to empathize with the issues that we face as bisexual women. Another major issue was the fact that SBWN didn't really have a decision-making scheme (other than voice votes) that would be truly fair and keep the best interests of the group and its members in mind.

It was decided that for an issue that affects the group as much this one, consensus is tremendously important. Consensus decision-making is a method that allows all members to have a voice. (See the article on page 14 for a description of how the process works.) The results of that vote are as follows:

To be eligible to join SBWN, a transsexual must have lived as a woman for one year.

Transsexuals are free to attend the Sunday night large groups, specifically formed small groups and all mixed social gatherings. They will not be eligible to attend the Monday night Newcomer's Group and social gatherings which are defined as women-born-women only.

Transsexuals will be allowed to vote, following SBWN policy.

After one year the policy regarding transsexuals will be re-evaluated. TS members will not be eligible to vote in that re-evaluation.

With all that in mind, plan on attending the March 29 meeting where this topic will be addressed. Remember that to be eligible to vote, a member must have attended two out of the last five business meetings (Coordinating Committee meetings count.) ▼

ORGANIZING

(Continued from page 9)

ing people can read? On what level?

Is there a chance that we will be bringing in parents? Are we prepared to deal with child care? Are we comfortable with acknowledging if we don't have these resources?

Are we assuming that people of these communities work the same kinds of hours as the people within our group?

Are we able to make it possible for people to be involved in our group while their lives are still busy, or when their families demand more time?

Have we made our meetings/events/literature as accessible as possible to those with visible or hidden disabilities?

Are we able to have meetings/events/literature available to people who cannot financially pay for them? Do we have alternatives?

If we will be speaking about sexual or health issues, is it appropriate to have men and women together? Couples and singles? Various ages?

Answers to these questions will lead to different ways of communicating our desire to be more inclusive. Many different publications, locations and methods should be considered when advertising. We should be ready to accept that change will not be immediate, and leave some time to see our results. We should also be ready to change our methods if they don't work or are not appropriate.

Once different communities are together, the next task is communication. Is it appropriate to set up a space and time for focus groups on particular issues? Should the different communities of color each have their time? Should people of different genders? Different classes? Different religions? If these focus groups are appropri-

ate, how do we find facilitators, or are they necessary? We may find that facilitators are best chosen by the people in the group, and not by an outsider. How do these groups then come together to form another, diverse community?

Lastly, some potential pitfalls. From my personal experience working with different communities, I have learned that there are times when we risk alienating people as a result of ignorance or lack of attention. It is true that everything must be taken in context, and this is by no means a list of commandments. However, I've benefited when these pointers were given to me.

Try to avoid singling out someone for their opinion because they are disabled, transsexual, a person of color, etc., especially in front of a group. This assumes that we are not able or willing to educate others on that topic right then. If it is not the responsibility of the victim of oppression to do the teaching.

Try to avoid making jokes about religion which assume that everyone is secular and/or has problems with organized religion. Often in the queer community, people who are religious or who value that part of their background are not given the space to express that part of themselves and what is valuable about it. This is especially important when dealing with communities of color.

Try to avoid making statements which assume that everyone of a particular community will have the same opinion about a particular topic. This seems really basic, but it is a particular danger when dealing with several new people of one community before you are able to get to know them as individuals.

Learn to recognize what pushes your buttons, and try to figure out why. By the same token, try to understand what is disturbing to others, and why.

When doing outreach specifically to

people of color, don't assume that similar techniques should be used for each community. There is no single "community of color", just as there is no single "bi community". Within the Asian-American community for example, there are many differences between Japanese and Korean-Americans, and particular outreach techniques into one community may not be as successful in other communities.

Learn avenues open for people to respond to an event or publication so everyone can learn

I am certainly no expert in the field of multi-cultural/multi-ethnic organizing. I am just trying to share some of what I've learned over time. Every situation, every individual, calls for an evaluation specific to that time and person. The best we can do is to open up real dialogue which recognizes and values our differences, while discussing ways to work together. ▼

STILL MORE NEWS

The incoming president of the National Organization for Women has been married to a Miami man for nearly 25 years. She also says she has a female companion in Washington.

"I have never been anything but very honest about who I am and how I live my life," says Patricia Ireland, who succeeded Molly Yard as president of NOW on December 15.

"People are so interested in saying that you should limit your love," she said. "I have no interest in having people tell me how to choose my family and who to love."

Ireland, 46, a lawyer and former flight attendant, has been executive vice president of the 250,000-member feminist

(Continued on page 20)

North BI Northwest

POETRY

"To Whom It May Concern"

I have found this to be true
that one plus one makes two
And no matter how closely
our hearts beat
These two parallel lives will never meet

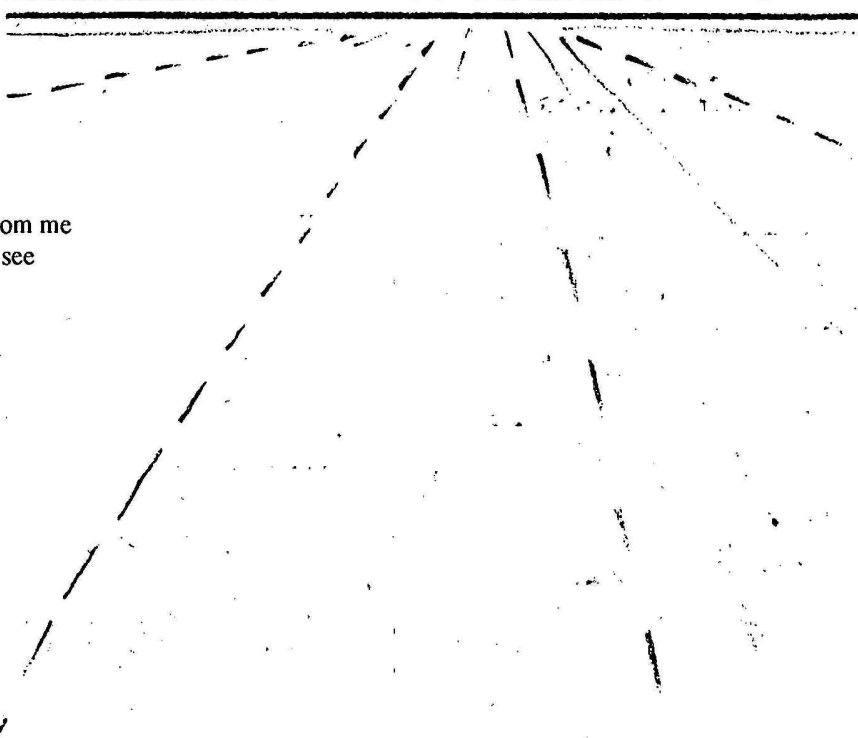
If truth be told, it rarely would come from me
I cannot take the blame, for the wonder that you see
And when I think of you
one plus one makes two
This I have found to be true

The mountains are beyond the horizon
across the miles of open road
Our moon dancing across the sky
follows me close by
and the earth moves around the sun
yet, two equals one plus one

and if truth be told, it rarely would come from me
I cannot take the blame, for the wonder that you see
and when I think of you
one plus one makes two
This I have found to be true

So I am writing this letter to...
To whom it may concern
Through the fog my vision
is so hard to discern
My stomach turns, and my mouth is dry
As I felt your presence near-
though my vision wasn't clear
But, I couldn't move away from your glance
So I thought I'd take a chance
And still one plus one makes two
This I've found rings true

-Alyx



mad2/2004/92

IRELAND

(Continued from page 18)

group for four years. Her husband, James Humble, is a painter.

Ireland discussed her private life in a lengthy interview in the December 17 issue of *The Advocate*, a national gay and lesbian magazine. She also addressed the subject in a telephone interview.

"I love him," she said of her husband. "He is a very important part of my life and has been for nearly 25 years."

She said her female companion of more than four years is also important to her, and said she sees no reason to give up either relationship.

Ireland refused to label herself as either lesbian or bisexual.

Asked by the *Advocate* if having a female companion means "you have a love relationship with a woman," she answered that "it's the same thing." But she refused to elaborate, either to the magazine or in the interview.

"When you get right up to the issue of what I do behind closed doors - because I'm not into public sex - I have to say that's off-limits," Ireland told the magazine. "The other thing is, it's a snapshot...my life is a motion picture and that's like a snapshot."

Ireland said in a telephone interview that she is a firm believer in the right to privacy. "At the same time, the outlines, the public facts of my life are not something I have any interest in hiding," she said. "I think it's important to say who you are. I guess someone being straightforward about their life is still news at this point in history."

Eleanor Smeal, a former NOW president, said Ireland's disclosures are "consistent with our policy of being honest and not hypocritical." She said

Ireland, who worked her way up through the ranks, is well-suited to head the organization.

"She's a tough attorney. I think she'll be very knowledgeable and strong," Smeal said.

NOW's stated priorities include

protecting abortion rights, passing the Equal Rights Amendment, improving women's economic status, expanding lesbian rights, and creating a new political party more responsive to women.

Several feminists, though none on the record, said Ireland's revelations about her
(Continued on page 22)

This was sent to us by a friend:

You've read *Closer to Home!!*
You've read *Bi Any Other Name!*
You've read *Bisexuality: A Reader and Sourcebook*.
You've read *Bisexual Politics...*
You've read (ho-hum) *Bisexual Lives...*
Let's face it, you're getting pretty tired of reading all these books.

But now, Oh-so-Politically-(In)Correct Press announces a new book just for you:

BISEXUALITY:WHO REALLY CARES ANYWAY?

includes such controversial essays as:

"I was Bisexual but I gave it up for Lent: A Long, Tedious Story of My Agonizingly Complex and Intricate Coming Process."
"Bi Politics: A Contradiction in Terms?"
"Let's Face it, Women are Really Better", a scandalous essay by John Doe
"This is who I Am, and Boy Am I oppressed" - poetry by bisexual feminist vegan single anti-interventionist chocoholic botanist from Santa Cruz
"Bisexual Nihilists: Fuck Theory, Let's All Get Laid!"
"Bisexual Socialists: The Bisexual Nihilists are Just Frustrated!"
"Bisexual Nihilists: We Are Not, and your Theory Sucks!"
"Bisexual Surrealists: Chicken is Better"
"Coming Out to Your Lover as Straight"
"Adult Children of Monosexuals: Bi's Reclaim Our Rage!"
"Lesbian-Bi Dialogues: Couldn't We All Just Rent 'Desert Hearts' Instead?"
"A Political History of the Bi Community: Ted slept with Jim, who slept with Alice, who slept with Julia and Bill, who slept with..."
"Let's Face It, Women are Really Better", a scandalous essay by Jane Doe
"Stereotypes about Bisexuality: They're All Really True! Hahahahahahaha..."
"Is Keanu Reeves Really Bisexual? And where do I get his phone number?"

SOUND LIKE YOUR TYPE OF BOOK? LOOK FOR IT IN A BOOKSTORE NEAR YOU. (Provided you live in the Bay Area, New York, Boston, Seattle, Philadelphia, Chicago, or DC) SOON!

BOOKS

If you liked "Bi Any Other Name", Here's a list of Bisexual titles to look for in the bookstore or library:

NONFICTION

Charlotte Wolf, *Bisexuality: A Study*. 1975

Fred Klein, *The Bisexual Option: a Concept of 100% Intimacy*. 1978

Fred Klein and Timothy J. Wolf (eds.), *Bisexualities: Theory and Research*. Also published as *Two Lives to Lead: Bisexuality in Men and Women*. 1985

Rebecca Schuster, "Sexuality as a continuum: the bisexual identity" in *Lesbian Psychologies: Explorations and Challenges* (edited by Boston Lesbian Psychologies collective) 1987

Off-Pink Publishing Collective, *Bisexual Lives*. 1988

Loraine Hutchins and Lani Kaahumanu, eds., *Bi Any Other Name*. 1990

Elizabeth Reba Weise, ed., *Closer to Home*. Seal Press 1992

BIOGRAPHIES

S Delany, *Motion of Light on Darkness*

Hilda Doolittle, *HERmione*

Coling MacInnes, *Loving Them Both*

Robin Morgan, *Dry Your Smile*

Anais Nin, *The Diaries of Anais Nin*

FICTION

Robert Heinlein, *Friday*

Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*

Elizabeth Lynn, *A Different Light*

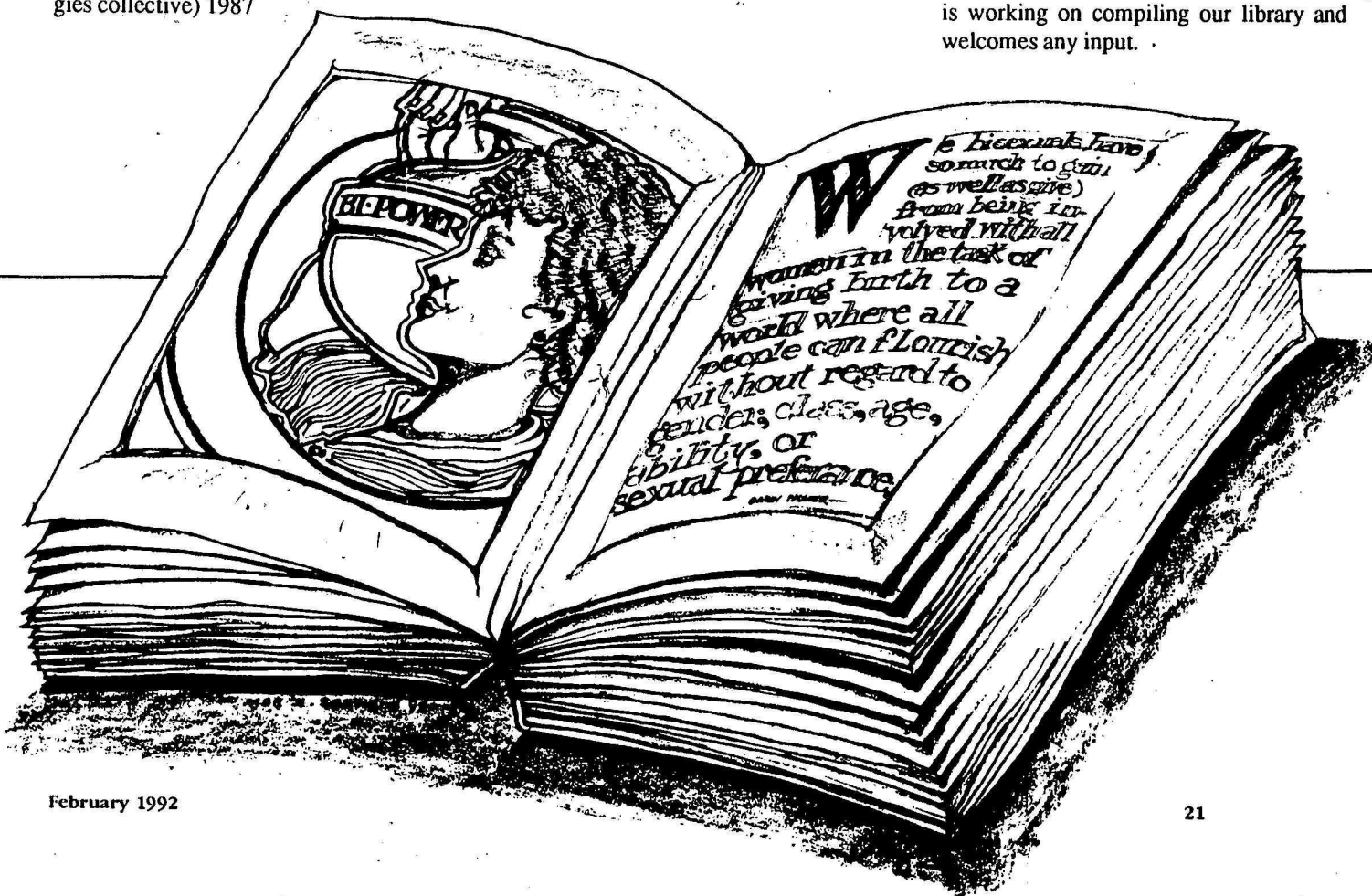
Marge Piercy, *Summer People*

Tom Robbins, *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues*

(listed in Bi-Lines, the newsletter of the Wellington Bisexual Women's Group)

A local addition to the fiction list is Michael Chabon, a resident of Seattle (last I heard) most noted for his excellent novel *Mysteries of Pittsburgh*.

Please send us any other suggestions. We can publish more lists, and our librarian is working on compiling our library and welcomes any input.



POLYFIDELITY

(Continued from page 3)

She asked the group to consider how we would feel if we were told we could have only one friend—only one person to fill all the emotional needs, provide all the intellectual stimulation, give us all the hugs we were used to receiving from several different friends. She believed that monogamy was similar to this situation.

Rather than having a primary commitment to a relationship with someone else, she said, her primary relationship was with herself. Her other relationships were all secondary, or third or fourth, depending on how close she was to the person.

Although many people see jealousy as a hazard of non-monogamous living, she saw it as an irrational emotion with its roots in societal expectations of monogamy. She believes that people feel threatened when their partner is attracted to someone else because they expect their partner to be the one person who will love them and take care of them for the rest of their lives.

The group then split into smaller groups to play a game similar to *Scruples*, in which each person drew cards from a deck and answered the questions that were on the cards. All the questions related to polyfidelity. Once the person who drew the card had responded, other people could add their thoughts to the discussion. Some of the questions probed how polyfidelitous people might deal with the fact that their lovers had other relationships. Two questions like this were "If your lover's lover lived in your apartment building, how would you interact with her/him?" and the seemingly improbable "What would you do if your lover's lover were hired as your boss?" A few women's first reaction was that they would quit, at least as soon as they had found another job. Other women thought it would

depend on how professional the person was as a supervisor, and how comfortable you were with polyfidelity.

Other questions dealt with the challenges of balancing simultaneous relationships with different people. "You are sick, and both lovers want to baby you. Do you let just one?" asked one card. The question implied that there might be rivalry between the lovers, but the women in my group did not feel that there necessarily would be. Several women agreed that they would accept babying from both lovers—that an advantage of polyfidelity was that you did not depend on just one person for love and support.

"Have you learned a new pleasure from a lover that you were unable to share with another lover?" raised the issue of drawing boundaries between relationships. One woman said she had had relationships in which both partners had agreed to non-monogamy in principle, but in reality neither partner wanted to hear about the other partner's outside relationships. Another woman related a similar experience, in which her own and her partner's inability to discuss their outside relationships prevented them from becoming really close to each other.

A discussion of jealousy ensued. Most women agreed that although jealousy might be irrational it was real, and had to be dealt with. Even women who enjoyed a non-monogamous lifestyle had at times experienced strong feelings of jealousy. One woman suggested that jealousy was easier to manage when thought of and discussed as specific fears of abandonment or loneliness.

After a set period of time the small groups recombined, and the meeting concluded with a discussion on boundaries and honesty. One woman noted that honesty did not have to mean telling all. For instance, she thought it was not unhealthily secretive

not to tell one partner what you did in bed with another. Several women expressed the belief that honesty was the key to successful polyfidelity—most importantly, all parties involved had to know and agree that a relationship would be non-monogamous. ▼

IRELAND

(Continued from page 20)

personal life could reinforce a stereotype of NOW, accurate or not, as out of step.

"There's already a perception that they're out of the mainstream of feminism, on the edge of feminism, a gay front group," said one veteran feminist who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Another longtime activist, who also refused to be identified, said polls show many people feel "uncomfortable about alternative lifestyles. And she's opening the discussion on more than just a lesbian relationship. This also raises the issue of extramarital relationships."

Ireland said people who don't support women's rights have always tried to paint NOW as a lesbian organization. In the meantime, she said, the group has kept growing and "there are now more women's rights supporters in all kinds of institutions and professions. They've moved in our direction on the issues. A whole lot of mainstream has moved in our direction."

She hopes her openness will have a positive effect. "Part of what we have to sell is that refreshing aspect of people being straightforward about who they are," she told *The Advocate*. (story from the Associated Press)

Those of us who are more comfortable with "alternative lifestyles" and resent the treatment of lesbians, bisexuals, and gays as invisible or "out of step" can write to and support Patricia Ireland through NOW, 1000 16th St. NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20036 ▼

MEMORIES

I've been involved with SBWN since its first year (maybe even earlier, as its founder and I had been friends since the previous year). At first, it was pretty exciting just to have discovered bisexual community. As time went on, we grew and became more political, providing more opportunities to become involved. After a couple of SBWN representatives were on television, we had to get a post office box to handle the mail we expected; I volunteered to do this, so I get to hold the key, therefore get to be the first to read all the mail! In time we felt a need to have a telephone, to better network with other organizations and to serve women who might be looking for us. This phone ended up in my home, though I seldom answer it, leaving it usually for the machine or phone-duty women.

Networking is one of the primary benefits I've gotten from my SBWN involvement. I've met lots of interesting bi women and men from all over the world, most in person and a few by mail only. Clare from London, Vickie from San Francisco, Robyn and Laura from Boston have stayed at my home, and other world travellers have been hosted by other group members here in Seattle. I thank Lisa, Clive, and Clare in England, Diana and Dave in Scotland, Robyn and Ginny in Boston, and Dafydd in Philadelphia for providing me with congenial housing and transportation in the past year. I've attended bi-group events in Edinburgh, London, Boston, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Portland Ore, Vancouver BC, and hope to add to my list (Hawaii, DC, New Mexico, The Netherlands, New Zealand (why not?)). I've met interesting and fun people in all these places, with some enduring friendships developing.

I've found some friendships here in my own SBWN, too, as well as playmates to go river tubing, horseback riding, skiing with. Topic meetings have been educational, fun, and/or very moving for the most part.

Check-in meetings are often quite rewarding: I get emotional support on troubling issues; advice and opinions on confusing ones; and resources and information on practical matters.

Then there have been those opportunities for naughty fun—you know, the sort of wicked stuff 'they' suspect us bisexuals of doing. Well, some of us actually do...

It has seemed different for the past year or so, causing me to feel a little less interested in or comfortable with the group. Many of the longer-term members (old friends) are no longer coming to meetings, and it takes greater effort to see them outside. The demographics of the group seem to be changing: more homogeneity, more youth, less feminism? I'm not sure that's true. What is true is that we've grown immensely. Most meetings have over twenty women attending. The check-ins have become less personal. Since there's no time for any more than each person to have her few minutes to speak, we've lost the personal interaction we used to have. This has been addressed by the coordinating committee and we're going to experiment with some solutions, which I feel good about. As growth continues, we may have to have 'franchises,' or sponsor meetings in different neighborhoods, thereby being more accessible to even more women.

Another purpose the group has served is a venue for me to exercise my modest intellect among exciting feminist intellectuals. This has been expanded by the organization of the SBMU. I've found social and intellectual rewards in my interactions with them.

Thanks, everyone, for helping keep it going! - *Peggy Walsh*

Impressions of SBWN: SBWN represents a supportive network of potentially non-judgemental women. One can find a sympathetic ear, or find an opportunity to be

supportive oneself. Not only that, it's just plain fun to socialize in SBWN, and the meetings can be very educational, too.

Roberta

My first encounter with SBWN was when I was still living in San Francisco. I attended the 1990 Bisexual Conference, which was my very first encounter with an organized bisexual group of any kind. Somehow, instead of feeling overwhelmed, I felt like a fish that had been on land, finally being returned to its pond. I was already planning to move to Seattle, for grad school, but I had no idea that such a strong and exciting group of women would be waiting there for me. From the first day of the conference, they were hard to miss. They had the largest contingent and the biggest, pinkest banner of all. I was so happy to see them that I introduced myself to Beth, Joan, Gwen (who left Seattle before I got here), and the others, and they joked that I would have to look for an apartment in Wallingford, where the greatest concentration of SBWN mailing list members resided (Yes, I live in Wallingford now!). I offered to help them with a photograph they were trying to take of the group. They insisted that I be in the photo as well, since I was certainly going to be part of their group as soon as I got to Seattle. Indeed, as soon as I moved up here, I began going to meetings, and have only missed a couple since. SBWN has been a wonderful support group and the source for most of my local friends. Writing for North Bi Northwest has fostered welcome growth and change in my skill and my conception of myself as a writer, as well. I definitely feel like I am part of this group. So much a part, in fact, that it makes perfect sense that there is a photo with me in it, even before I joined the group! - *Kathleen Bennet*



Calendar

Please note that topics can be tentative. Call the bi-phone at 783-7987 to check.

For men's events, call the Seattle Bisexual Men's Union at 720-4506.

FEBRUARY 2

SBWN Topic Meeting: Alternative sexualities; s/m, celibacy; kink, swinging, etc. 6:00 pm

FEBRUARY 6

Pacific Northwest Veteran's Organization (for Les/Bi/Gay Veterans) meets at Federal Way Library 7:30 pm. Call Margaret for info. 362-4920 All supporters welcome

FEBRUARY 8

Trip to Portland for '93 March on Washington Regional Planning Meeting. 12 noon to 5pm at Embers. Call SBMU phone for details

FEBRUARY 9

SBMU meeting: Nonmonogamy discussion at 7:00pm. Seattle Central Community College B107

FEBRUARY 10

SBWN Newcomers group 7:15 pm

Last-minute planning meeting for Bi Visibility Day. Call SBMU for details

FEBRUARY 14

Bisexual Visibility Day. Rally at 4:30 at 50th and University, Dinner 6:00 pm, dance from 7 to 11, all for \$5-\$10 donation. RSVP at 720-4506 by Feb 12. Call bi-phone for details.

FEBRUARY 16

SBWN Check-in meeting 6:00pm

FEBRUARY 23

SBWN and SBMU dinner. Lotus Thai Restaurant 2101 N. 45th. 6:00pm

FEBRUARY 24

SBWN Newcomer's Group, 7:15pm

FEBRUARY 29

SBWN and SBMU joint social and discussion of Polyfidelity. 8pm to midnight at Misha's. Call bi-phone for details.

MARCH 1

Deadline for submissions to North Bi Northwest

MARCH 1

SBWN Topic Night: Recognizing prejudices and creating safe space for everyone. 6:00pm

MARCH 8

SBWN Coordinating Committee meeting 7:00pm at Joan's

SBMU meeting: Personal sexual tastes, a series of questions. Seattle Central Comm. Coll. B107, 7pm

MARCH 9

SBWN Newcomer's group, 7:15pm

MARCH 15

SBWN Check-in meeting, 6pm

MARCH 21

Vernal Equinox social, call bi-phone for details

MARCH 23

SBWN Newcomer's group, 7:15pm

MARCH 25

Newsletter mailing party, SBWN and SBMU, 6:30 pm at Lizabeth's

MARCH 29

SBWN Topic night: Transsexual inclusion decision re-evaluation 6pm

APRIL 6

SBWN Newcomer's group, 7:15pm

APRIL 12

SBWN meeting, check-in and elections, 6pm

APRIL 20

SBWN Newcomer's group meeting, 7:15pm

APRIL 26 6:00 p.m.

SBWN and SBMU meet separately at Seattle Central Community College B107 for business and preliminary discussion, then come together for announcements and a joint discussion of sexism at 7:30